

office of which slander, bribery, or intrigue at Court may at any moment deprive him, it is natural that the most coveted positions should be those in which the largest perquisites can be made, and that their occupants should feel it their bounden duty to "make hay while the sun shines,"—in other words, to squeeze the people so long as there is anything left to squeeze. The great drawback of the Persian peasant's life is that he has no security for the earnings of labour. He is the ultimate sponge to be sucked dry by all above him. Every official squeezes the man below him, and the highest is squeezed by the Crown.

Little, if any, of the revenue drawn from the country is spent on works of public utility, and roads, bridges, official buildings, fortifications, and all else are allowed to fall into disrepair. In downright English the administration of government and law is execrable, and there can be little hope of a resurrection for Persia until the system under which she is impoverished be reformed or swept away.

But who is to cleanse this Augean stable? Who will introduce the elementary principles of justice? —Are tools of the right temper to work with to be found among the men of this generation? Is the dwarfing and narrowing creed¹ of Islam to be replaced or in any way to be

¹ In *The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline, and Fall*, a valuable recent work, its author, Sir W. Muir, K. C.S.I., dwells very strongly on the narrowing influence of Islam on national life, and concludes his review of it in the following words: "As regards the spiritual, social, and dogmatic

aspect of Islam, there has been neither progress nor material change. Such as we found it in the days of the Caliphate, such is it also at the present day. Christian nations may advance in civilisation, freedom, and morality, in philosophy, science, and the arts, but Islam stands still. And thus stationary, so far as the lessons of its history avail, it will remain." In a chapter at the end of his book he deals with polygamy, servile concubinage, temporary marriages, and the law of divorce, as cankering the domestic life of Mohammedan countries, and *neutralising all civilising influences.*